AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently amended) A method for managing a file system, comprising:

    assigning a price to at least one resource of the file system and recording the price in metadata of the file system;

    receiving an application program interface (API) call from a user of the file system asking to access the at least one resource; and

    providing the at least one resource to the user while charging the user in response to the API call, with reference to the metadata, for use of the resource in accordance with the assigned price.

2.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one resource comprises at least one of a file, a directory and a storage volume.

3.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein assigning the price comprises determining charges for use of files in the file system depending on a number of the files opened by the user.

4.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein assigning the price comprises determining charges for use of the at least one resource depending on a volume of data transferred from the file system to the user.

5.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein assigning the price comprises determining charges for use of the at least one resource depending on a length of time during which the at least one resource is in use by the user.

6.   (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein assigning   the   price   comprises   assigning   different,

respective prices for the at least one resource to different classes of users.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 6, wherein receiving the API call comprises determining an identity of the user responsively to the API call, and wherein providing the at least one resource comprises selecting one of the respective prices depending on the identity of the user.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein assigning the price comprises assigning different, respective prices to a plurality of different resources.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the API call comprises receiving an invocation of at least one of a mount API, an open API, a read API and a write API.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 1, and comprising crediting a supplier of the at least one resource with at least a portion of an amount charged to the user for use of the resource.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the API call comprises receiving a request from a client computer, transmitted over a network to a storage node, to access the at least one resource held in storage by the storage node, and wherein providing the at least one resource comprises conveying the at least one resource from the storage node over the network to the client computer.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein charging the user comprises at least one of recording a charge against an account held by the user and receiving a transfer of payment from the user.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein assigning the price comprises displaying a listing of the

resources so as to enable an operator of the apparatus to assign the price to the at least one resource.

14. (Currently amended) Apparatus for managing a file system, comprising:

a storage device, which is arranged to store resources of the file system; and

a processor, which is arranged to record in metadata of the file system a price assigned to at least one resource among the resources stored on the storage device, and which is further arranged, upon receiving an application program interface (API) call from a user of the file system asking to access the at least one resource, to provide the at least one resource from the storage device to the user while charging the user in response to the API call, with reference to the metadata, for use of the resource in accordance with the assigned price.

15. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the at least one resource comprises at least one of a file, a directory and a storage volume.

16. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is arranged, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge the user for use of files in the file system depending on a number of the files opened by the user.

17. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is arranged, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge the user for use of the at least one resource depending on a volume of data transferred from the storage device to the user.

18. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is arranged, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge the user for use of the at least one

resource depending on a length of time during which the at least one resource is in use by the user.

19. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is arranged, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge different, respective prices for the at least one resource to different classes of users.

20. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the processor is arranged to determine an identity of the user responsively to the API call, and to select one of the respective prices depending on the identity of the user.

21. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is arranged, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge different, respective prices for different resources of the file system.

22. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the API call comprises at least one of a mount API, an open API, a read API and a write API.

23. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is further arranged to credit a supplier of the at least one resource with at least a portion of an amount charged to the user for use of the resource.

24. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is coupled to receive the API call over a network from a client computer, and to convey the at least one resource from the storage device over the network to the client computer.

25. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the processor is arranged to charge the user by performing at least one of recording a charge against an account held by the user and receiving a transfer of payment from the user.

26. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 14, and comprising a display, which is arranged to present a listing of the resources so as to enable an operator of the apparatus to assign the price to the at least one resource.

27. (Currently amended) A computer software product, comprising a computer-readable medium in which program instructions are stored, which instructions, when read by a computer, cause the computer to maintain in metadata of the file system a record of a price that is assigned to at least one resource of a file system, and upon receiving an application program interface (API) call from a user of the file system asking to access the at least one resource, to provide the at least one resource to the user while charging the user in response to the API call, with reference to the metadata, for use of the resource in accordance with the assigned price.

28. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the at least one resource comprises at least one of a file, a directory and a storage volume.

29. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions cause the computer, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge the user for use of files in the file system depending on a number of the files opened by the user.

30. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions cause the computer, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge the user for use of the at least one resource depending on a volume of data transferred to the user.

31. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions cause the computer, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge the user for use of the at least

one resource depending on a length of time during which the at least one resource is in use by the user.

32. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions cause the computer, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge different, respective prices for the at least one resource to different classes of users.

33. (Original) The product according to claim 30, wherein the instructions cause the computer to determine an identity of the user responsively to the API call, and to select one of the respective prices depending on the identity of the user.

34. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions cause the computer, in accordance with the assigned price, to charge different, respective prices for different resources of the file system.

35. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the API call comprises at least one of a mount API, an open API, a read API and a write API.

36. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions further cause the computer to credit a supplier of the at least one resource with at least a portion of an amount charged to the user for use of the resource.

37. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the computer is coupled to receive the API call over a network from a client computer, and wherein the instructions cause the computer to convey the at least one resource from the storage device over the network to the client computer.

38. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions cause the computer to charge the user by performing at least one of recording a charge against an

account held by the user and receiving a transfer of payment from the user.

39. (Original) The product according to claim 27, wherein the instructions cause the computer to display a listing of the resources so as to enable an operator of the apparatus to assign the price to the at least one resource.